1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

IDEATIONAL CULTURE

182 The third major division of Kaska culture is built principally around the ideas and attitudes which the Indians direct toward the supernatural, natural, and social environments. These ideas, in many cases underlying behaviors described in the technical and social cultures, serve both adaptive and adjustive functions but in addition fulfill the important need of securing the individual's personal adjustment toward his known universe. Through these thought patterns the Indian strives to understand his experience.

128 In this division we will describe beliefs ranging from the fields of religion to natural history and human biology. We will discuss behaviors toward the supernatural environment and present activities illustrating the motivating role of other ideas. An attempt will also be made to understand the patterned, conscious and unconscious, thought and emotional processes of the people, and to outline the breakdown of rational control which occurs in some Indians when under the influence of alcohol or in mental disease.

NUMBERS AND MEASURES

803 Although the western system of numeration has been universally adopted in the Kaska 802 area, few individuals are capable of extending such reckoning beyond one hundred. Arith- 177 metical calculations are limited to simple mental addition and subtraction. No ritual or 801 symbolic significance of numbers could be obtained.

804 The standard English system of weights and measures is in use, but the ability to under- [177] stand these is not evenly developed. Most men have a fairly clear conception of mass measures, such as pounds, but a much more limited comprehension of length. When traveling along the crooked courses of rivers, Indians often refer to distance in terms of the number of points of land that must be rounded rather than the mileage that remains to be covered. There is keen interest in translating the distance between two known locales into miles but individual estimates are often widely at variance. White men are regarded as authoritative sources of such information, the ethnographer's maps being several times utilized in order to measure the distance from Lower Post to individuals' trap lines. Volume measures are also difficult for people to estimate, especially if a container is larger than five gallons.

In sewing the method of measurement is to compare the material to the span of the hand or the length of the arm. Rules, measuring rods, and squares are not used in carpentry or sewing.

805 Most Indians own clocks and pocket or wrist watches. These, however, are not primarily used to order time since most people are unable to read the dials and the measurement of time, like other measures, is only gradually being learned. Disagreement between time pieces is often considerable, especially in winter when, if a clock stops and there is no radio, the owner is only poorly able to guess at what hour to reset the instrument. The confusion resulting from Lower Post being on the boundary of two time zones is also partly responsible for the discrepancy between time pieces in summer. Individuals are not governed by time in the performance of customary activities.

By means of journals or by marking off the passage of days on a small calendar, an effort

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

755 787 Certain therapeutic rites required silence in order to be effective. These a shaman performed at a considerable distance from the sick camp, never within range of the sound of barking dogs. Probably under such circumstances a healer caused a sorcerer's evil to recoil on the latter. Detection of a sorcerer was easy if it happened that somebody remained conspicuously absent from a curing ceremony. Against the absent one the shaman directed the finger of guilt.

783 Confession helped to diagnose illness resulting from broken avoidances and apparently also possessed curative value in itself. The shaman asked, "You ever bother your sister?" "You ever kill an otter?" "How you kill mink?" "You ever steal?" When the patient had admitted an offense the confessor warned him not to repeat the deed upon recovery.

177 789 801 832 Following contact with Europeans a hunter came to perform a ritual to alleviate intense cold. He fired a dry root ("wolverine medicine") from a shotgun. Informants did not recognize the reference to "lucky number." The preceding material, however, suggests strongly that the number "four" possessed special significance. Apart from love songs, which may have been used with the idea of magically attracting a member of the opposite sex, love magic occupied little attention.[34]

754 As already indicated people sometimes used their magical power against other people. For example a reputed shaman who felt slighted or ridiculed might use sorcery in vengeance against his real or fancied detractors. People took care not to annoy a shaman. He should be "only pleased," said an informant. A man whose temperament favored sorcery sought to increase his power by dreaming of animals like the mink and otter but not all persons were sorcerers whose power emanated from these species. A sorcerer tried to "steal" his victim's wind, perhaps first securing a piece of the latter's clothing. Burial of such a possession in the ground brought about death. (Note the use of burial in this context.) A person suspecting sorcery might pay to have his wind returned. In this way really malevolent practitioners extorted women. Sorcerers meted out not only death but also illness, physical and mental, and also "troubled" a man by ruining his hunting ability. A good hunter knew that he had been sorcerized when, seeing a moose, he failed to strike the animal with his weapon. Black magic held a danger of mental illness for the evil magician, who in some cases was also executed with the community's consent. Sorcerers, however, could evade execution by slipping through their enemies' hands. An informant related a story about two Tlingit shamans, one of whom was evil. They both flew through the air. The good man disappeared after a time but his

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The wind had gone so far away that the patient was close to death. During the interval of unconsciousness nobody might leave the dwelling. After perhaps four hours the men simultaneously returned to awareness and renewed their singing. Part of the paraphernalia used in the rite consisted of a line strung with feathers. This the practitioner lashed around the patient's wrists and used to pull the latter from his bed. In that way he was pulled back to life, the informant explained. The pattern of going into a trance to retrieve an errant soul is close to the Eskimo pattern of shamanism. The line fastened to the patient recalls Eskimo divination customs.

[34] Love magic has been reported for the Tahltan. In one particular variety a white root was obtained from the ground and rolled into pellets. The woman's image was then drawn on a piece of skin and encircled with the pellets. If the charm was to be successful the pellets moved and at the same time the woman found herself attracted to the magician.